"Virtue Habituation and the Skill of Emotion Regulation"
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I.   Introduction

In <u>Nicomachean Ethics</u> [NE] II.1, Aristotle (1103a30-1103b10) draws a now familiar analogy between <u>aretai</u> (virtues) and <u>technai</u> (skills). The apparent basis of this comparison is that both virtue and skill are developed through practice and repetition, specifically by the learner performing the same kinds of actions as the expert: in other words, we become virtuous by performing virtuous actions.[1] His claim that 'like states arise from like activities' (<u>NE</u> 1103b20) has led some philosophers to challenge the virtue-skill analogy. In particular, Aristotle's skill analogy is sometimes dismissed because of the role that practical wisdom or <u>phronesis</u> purportedly plays in character virtue. John Hacker-Wright notes that while certain aspects of virtue might be acquired through repetition and practice, on the Aristotelian view 'there is a component of practical wisdom that creates a crucial distinction between practical wisdom and skill in that it requires <u>a correct conception of worthwhile ends</u>' (2015, p. 984, my emphasis). Thus, some intellectualist (or doxastic[2]) interpreters of Aristotle conclude that

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[1] For a defense of taking Aristotle's claim at face value, see Jimenez (2016).

[2] I am adapting Jessica Moss's (2012, pp.70-84) distinction between doxastic and phantastic accounts, more commonly referred to as the intellectualist and ant-intellectualist accounts. Whereas she applies this contrast to accounts of *pathé*, I use it to refer to what Julia Annas (2011, p. 25) calls intellectualist and subrational accounts of virtue. Moss's taxonomy has distinct advantages. First—and most important—it allows there to be cognitive components in

character virtue is not, at its core, a skill, because practical wisdom is categorically different from technai.[3]

I argue that this intellectualist interpretation of Aristotle is mistaken. Aristotle distinguishes the rational and non-rational parts of the soul. Character virtue stems primarily from the non-rational part of the soul (ta orektikon), and is developed through the habituation of passionate elements, primarily phantasia and pathé (the Politics refers to the orektikon as the παθητικὸν μόριον, the passionate part of the soul (Aristotle, *Politics*, 1254b8).[4] Practical wisdom, on the other hand, is an intellectual virtue stemming from the rational part of the soul.

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both accounts, whereas Annas's taxonomy clearly implies that there is no role for cognition in the subrational account. Furthermore, whereas Annas's taxonomy clearly privileges the intellectualist account, Moss's puts the two on a more even playing field, allowing the reader to see the finer distinctions between the two accounts. Some of Annas's earlier writings illuminate her position on Aristotle: 'it is significant that Aristotle is a lone voice here. The ancient virtue ethics tradition followed Plato and the Stoics in holding that virtue is a skill. That is, it is a kind of skill, there being other kinds as well; virtue is, as the Stoics put it, the skill of living. The claim that we should follow the ancient tradition rather than Aristotle may at first sound rather academic, but this issue of whether virtue is or is not a skill is not merely of historical interest: it raises philosophically crucial issues about the intellectual structure of virtue' (2003, pp. 16–17).

[3] From Aristotle's perspective, practical wisdom is not a skill, which is not in debate, since Aristotle makes the point clear at NE 1140b1-5.

[4] Moss stresses this point and most often refers to the *orektikon* as the passionate part (2012, pp. 71-72).

As Angier states, 'In terms of textual sequence, his treatment of ethismos in NE II.1 and II.4 is clearly and strongly discontinuous with his investigation of practical reason (phronēsis) in NE VI. And this discontinuity of treatment is paralleled by a further, theoretical contrast he makes between the irrational and the rational soul' (2010, p. 110). Though practical wisdom is necessary for strict or complete virtue (aretè kuria), it is not necessary for the habituated virtue that Aristotle refers to in book II (NE 1104a10-1104b1).[5] Character virtue is a skill that is cultivated through the non-rational habituation of the orektikon. Therefore, a phantastic account of moral virtue can better account for the virtue-skill analogy than the intellectualist accounts.

This essay proceeds as follows. I briefly discuss the skill analogy, which is primarily located in book II of the Nicomachean Ethics, a section on character virtue. The location of the discussion reveals that Aristotle's analogy is with something non-rational, because there are no rational elements in the orektikon. Character virtue is a non-rational capacity that is developed through the habituation of passionate elements, i.e. the emotions. Character virtue also determines how the end appears to the agent and therefore provides us with our goals through the faculty of phantasia. Phantasia is a form of non-rational evaluative cognition that allows the

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[5] Both Moss and Jimenez make similar distinctions. Moss distinguishes 'habituated' and 'strict virtue,' (2011, p. 239) while Jimenez discusses how a not-yet-virtuous agent can perform some virtuous actions if they have the right motivation (2016, p. 7). What the not-yet-virtuous agent lacks is the stable disposition. Moss goes further, arguing that an agent can have a stable disposition—i.e., an enduring desire for the good—while lacking practical reason, which allows the agent to consistently hit the target that he already desires, suggesting a tri-level distinction. Bostock explicitly affirms this tri-level account of virtue: natural, trained, and full (2000, p. 86).

agent to see actions or events as good or bad and is the basis of human emotions. Phantasiai are pleasurable perceptions of situations through memory, expectation, or 'imaginative embellishment of a situation (e.g. visualization)' (Moss 2012, p. 70). Anger, courage, generosity, pride, and many other moral virtues are painful or pleasurable perceptions of value-laden situations. A virtuous person consistently sees situations in a virtuous way, i.e. the things that should appear good to the agent do in fact appear good. Grasping situations as good requires habituated, moderate emotions. The crux of my argument is that the skill analogy refers precisely to the non-rational habituation of phantasia-based emotions. Habitual repetition alters the emotional responses the agent experiences by changing the agent's construal (or appearance - phantasia) of value-laden situations. I conclude by briefly mentioning two contemporary forms of emotion regulation—cognitive reappraisal and cognitive-behavioural therapy—that lend support from empirical psychology to Aristotle's claim that emotions can be habituated. Character virtue is indeed a skill; it is—at least in part—the skill of emotion regulation.

II.   The Virtue-Skill Analogy

In Nicomachean Ethics II.1, Aristotle draws a now familiar analogy between aretai ('virtues') and technai ('skills'). The comparison yields several parallels between aretai and technai. First, 'We acquire virtues by first exercising them. The same is true of skills, since what we need to learn before doing, we learn by doing…' (NE 1103a32–34). Both aretai and technai are "learned" or acquired by practice or repetition of the same kinds of activities that the expert will perform. This "learn by practice" claim implies that the non-virtuous agent can perform actions that have—at the least—important similarities to the actions that the virtuous agent performs. Second,

Again, as in the case of a skill, the origin and means of the development of each virtue are the same as those of its corruption: it is from playing the lyre that people become good and bad lyre players. And it is analogous in the case of builders and all the rest, since from building well, people will be good builders, from building badly, bad builders. . . . (<u>NE</u> 1103b8–11)

The skilful repetition of these practical actions will result in a skilled person—a person with a steady habit of performing that action well. As Jimenez puts it, these habitual dispositions require '"having exercised" (ἐνεργήσαντες) and "doing" (πράττοντες) virtuous actions before possessing the corresponding dispositions' (2016, pp. 3–4). One main aspect of the process of habituation is repeating the activities, like skill acquisition. The importance of activity leads Aristotle to state: 'For by acting as we do in our dealings with other men, some of us become just, others unjust; and by acting as we do in the face of danger, and by becoming habituated in feelings fear or confidence, some of us become courageous, others cowardly' (<u>NE</u> 1103b14–16). Repeating or practising the activity leads the agent consistently to perform certain types of actions and have the corresponding feelings: virtue is concerned with both <u>praxis</u> and <u>pathos</u>. Aristotle concludes: '<u>like states arise from like activities</u> (ἐκ τῶν ὁμοίων ἐνεργειῶν αἱ ἕξεις γίνονται)' (<u>NE</u> 1103b20). <u>Aretai</u> are like <u>technai</u> because both are habitual dispositions developed through practice.

Aristotle's comparison of skill development with virtue development leads to a puzzle: if like activities produce like states, then how will the person who is not yet virtuous (and therefore seemingly cannot perform virtuous activities) become virtuous? With skills such as flute playing the answer seems simple: the student must emulate the teacher, and the teacher helps the student correct mistakes and learn to play more precisely. The more consistently well the student plays,

the better that student becomes. Excellent practice leads to an excellent habit (ethos) or skill (techné). But Aristotle indicates that here we find a limit to the skill analogy: 'the products of the skills have their worth within themselves, so it is enough for them to be turned out with a certain quality (τὸ εὖ ἔχει ἐν αὑτοῖς)'; conversely, 'actions in accordance with virtues are done in a just or temperate way…if the agent acts in a certain state (αὐτά πως ἔχη)' (NE, 1105a26–30, my emphasis). This passage seems to commit Aristotle to the view that the goodness of techné depends entirely on the quality of the product, whereas virtues are not virtues simply in light of the type of action (praxis) that takes place: e.g. a person could perform what appears to be a courageous action without having the virtue of courage (e.g. if she is motivated by fame or money and not by honour or nobility). Rather, an action is virtuous only 'if the agent acts out of a sound mind (σωφρόνως),' namely, based on prohairesis, and 'from a firm and unshakeable state' (βεβαίως καὶ ἀμετακινήτως ἔχων πράττη) (NE, 1104b5a35).[6] Here we see the skill analogy break down: éthos arête is like a techné because both are developed and completed by habit. However, éthos aretê is not like techné because whereas with techné the external quality of the activity or the product is all that matters—technically proficient and aesthetically pleasing flute

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[6] Note that this contrast between techné and arête appears to contradict Aristotle's use of the virtue-skill analogy in other texts. In particular, in Metaphysics I.1, Aristotle states that while artisans (cheirotechnitai) perform their craft through habit, master craftsman (architektōn) 'possess a theory and know the causes' (981b5) of their craft. The difference in the Metaphysics isn't the outcome of the craft but the agent's state, i.e. his theoretical knowledge of his craft. But Aristotle does not make this point in the ethical writings. For a discussion of Aristotle's various formulations of the virtue-skill analogy, see Angier (2010, chapter 5).

playing or a beautiful, well-carved statue—for character to be excellent the actions must have the right <u>internal motivation</u>. In other words, Aristotle 'now concedes that there is a difference between the domain of skills and the domain of virtue, the difference being that something inward is necessary for our being completely satisfied with the goodness of virtuous action, namely, some internal conditions of the moral agent' (Echenique, 2019, p. 208). Conversely, 'We judge whether or not someone possesses a skill by looking at the quality of the product of the skill' (Hughes, 2002, p. 55). If a building is well-designed, then the architect was skilled. Hughes goes on to point out that with virtue, we need to know how the agent <u>saw or understood</u> what he was doing to know whether the action counts as virtuous.

There are numerous responses to this puzzle in the literature, but there are two main approaches—intellectualist and deflationist.[7] The deflationist approach can be further subdivided into strong and moderate. The primary example of the strong deflationist view is what Nancy Sherman calls the 'mechanical view' (Sherman, 1989, p. 157). Just as all one needs to do to become a runner is to run every day, so repeatedly performing acts of kindness will result in the character trait of kindness—the agent will be disposed to feeling and acting kindly. A problematic aspect of strong deflationist accounts is that they make virtue look less like a skill and more like a knack (<u>empeiria</u>), because virtue is acquired in 'a purely unintellectual way,

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[7] I am borrowing the 'deflationary' categorization from Jimenez (2016, p. 6).

without understanding what it is he is doing and why' (Annas, 2011, p. 20). While few interpreters seriously consider this view, there are exceptions.[8]

A more common response to the virtue-skill puzzle is the moderate deflationary view. The moderate deflationary view admits that there is a gap between the kinds of actions that learners perform that the kinds that virtuous agents perform. As Jimenez states, 'these commentators assume that Aristotle's view is that the actions performed by the learners are virtuous in that they are the right actions in the circumstances, i.e. the kinds of actions characteristically performed by virtuous people, but that they differ from the activities of virtuous people not only in not being performed from a stable disposition of character, but also in that they lack virtuous motivation' (2016, pp. 18–19). According to this view, virtue is like a skill in that the learner becomes virtuous by performing actions that are <u>like</u> the actions of the virtuous agent (the external feature), but yet the learner lacks the crucial aspect of virtuous action, namely, that it be done for the right reason or end (the internal feature). Furthermore, this view takes very seriously Aristotle's emphasis on the disanalogy between <u>technai</u> and <u>aretai</u>: <u>aretai</u> require that the action be performed for the right reason and out of a stable and enduring disposition while in the case of <u>technai</u> 'the products of the skills have their worth within themselves,' i.e. the agent's intentions bear no necessary connection to the quality of the product (<u>NE</u>, 1105a26). Therefore, focusing on the disanalogy suggests that virtue is ultimately <u>not</u> a skill, even by Aristotle's own account. Thus, moderate deflationary accounts argue that virtue

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[8] Jimenez notes that defenders include Grant (1885), Stewart (1892), and Joachim (1951). She notes that there are modern defenders, but their views are more moderate. See for example Engberg-Pedersen (1983) and Curzer (2012).

both is and is not like a skill. The problem with this view is that it does not take seriously Aristotle's claim—which he makes several times—that like states result from like activities. If the actions that the non-virtuous agent performs are fundamentally different from the actions of the virtuous agent, then either Aristotle misspoke or did not really mean for us to take the 'like states result from like activities' claim seriously.

Another approach to reconciling Aristotle's virtue-skill analogy is the intellectualist view of virtue, which essentially rejects the analogy. According to this view, the most important aspect of aretê is its rational core. Moral virtue requires understanding and rational insight into morally laden situations. For instance, Mark Rowlands states that morally virtuous action requires that 'the agent must understand what a virtue is, and be motivated by this understanding to perform a certain action because it would be virtuous…' (2012, p. 102). Others go even further, claiming that virtuous action requires that the agent grasp ends as ends, and this is a job for practical wisdom. Consider Hacker-Wright again: 'there is a component of practical wisdom that creates a crucial distinction between practical wisdom and skill in that it requires a correct conception of worthwhile ends' (2015, p. 984). In fact, practical wisdom just is 'good deliberation guided by a correct conception of worthwhile ends' (2015, p. 984).[9] Crucially, Hacker-Wright argues that in order to achieve practical wisdom 'we must engage in reflection on our life considered as a whole, and develop a view of what it is to live well that includes deciding which activities are worth pursuing' (2015, p. 984). On this view, there is some affinity between practical wisdom and skill—since deliberating well takes practice—but there is a crucial

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[9] Sherman notes that 'virtue and practical wisdom require a reflective grasp (hupolēpsis) of the right ends' (1989, p. 27).

difference: practical wisdom involves deliberation about what kind of life we should live and what activities will contribute to that form of life. This task is both reflective and quasi-theoretical and as such is fundamentally different from skills, even complex skills like firefighting or neurosurgery. Even though complex skills require deliberation and reflection, they are compartmentalised and therefore do not require the kind of global reflection that Hacker-Wright argues moral virtue requires. Consequently, on this view moral virtue is categorically different from skills.

In my view, these views are misguided. Once we are clear about the nature of character virtue and the orektikon from which it stems, we can take Aristotle to mean just what he says: virtue is like skill in that both require that the learner perform the same kinds of actions as the expert, and both are acquired through habitual practice. Furthermore, a proper understanding of the orektikon and character virtue allows my view to include many of the claims of the intellectualists, because phantasia—of which pathos is a subset—is a form of cognitive evaluation. I will now focus on the orektikon and the nature of character virtue.

III.   The **Orektikon** and Character Virtue

When Aristotle favourably compares virtue to a skill, it is mainly in the context of describing character virtue or excellence. Therefore, it is relevant to keep in mind Aristotle's understanding of character virtue and the part of the soul from which it stems. Aristotle divides the soul into two main parts, rational and non-rational, and then draws a distinction between character and intellectual virtue. He states that 'one element of the soul has reason, while another

lacks it' (NE, 1102a28–30).[10] Rackham's translation is helpful: 'the soul consists of two parts, one irrational and the other capable of reason.' The word Rackham translates as 'irrational' is alogos, which literally means 'without reason' (1934, p. 63). Aristotle puts the orektikon in the alogos part of the soul. The orektikon is 'lacking reason, but (is) nevertheless…partaking in it' (NE, 1102b12-13). It can 'obey reason' or be in 'total harmony with reason' (NE, 1102b25). The orektikon is the part of the soul 'consisting in appetite and desire in general' (τὸ δ᾽ ἐπιθυμητικὸν καὶ ὅλως ὀρεκτικὸν μετέχει πως) (NE, 1102b29-30); a literal translation of ὅλως ὀρεκτικὸν would be 'the whole of desire,' which cannot be what Aristotle means since boulêsis is a form of rational desire. So, he must mean that the orektikon contains the entire range of non-rational orexis, chiefly pathé. He gives examples of the various pathé at NE 1105b21–23: 'epithumia, anger, fear, confidence, envy, joy, love, hate, longing, emulation, pity, and in general things accompanied by pleasure and pain'. Lastly, he tells us that 'virtue is distinguished along the same lines (presumably as the soul)' (NE, 1103a3-4). Therefore, we can conclude that character virtue inhabits the non-rational part of the soul and is primarily related to pathé.

Character virtues are 'states (from ἕξις– Latin habitus, related to 'hold' or 'have') [that] arise from like activities (ὁμοίων ἐνεργειῶν)' (NE, 1103b21), and are 'concerned with feelings and actions' (πάθη καὶ πράξεις) (NE, 1106b17, 25). So, character virtues are something the agent possesses—a hexis or disposition. Furthermore, 'virtue of character (éthos) is a result of habituation (ethos)…nature gives us the capacity to acquire them, and completion comes through

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[10] Unless otherwise noted, all translations of the Nicomachean Ethics are from the Crisp translation (Aristotle 2000). Also, unless otherwise noted, textual citations come from the Nicomachean Ethics.

habituation' (NE, 1103a26). Aristotle also notes that lawmakers make citizens good by habituating them (NE, 1103b4). As Jessica Moss puts it, there is significant textual evidence 'that virtue is the product of habituation in actions and passions…' (2011, p. 208); Hughes simply states that character virtues are 'habitual dispositions' (2001, p. 55).

Aristotle states several times that character virtue is about actions and feelings, but his discussion indicates that the most crucial aspect of character virtue is pathé. The description of courage in the Nicomachean Ethics makes it clear that the deciding factor for whether an activity is virtuous is how the agent understands or sees his actions. Prima facie, courage turns on the action the agent performs. Yet Aristotle defines courage as 'a mean concerning feelings of fear and confidence' (NE, 1115a6–7). The courageous person 'feels and acts (πάσχει καὶ πράττει) in accordance with the merits of the case, and as reason requires' (NE, 1115b20–21).[11] And how does the agent understand what something is worth? Put differently, what is the virtuous agent's goal? The courageous agent acts 'for the sake of what is noble (kalos)' (NE, 1115b12–13). When the courageous man (for Aristotle it is always a man) is faced with danger, his ethical character determines how he understands or sees his goals. The virtuous agent brings to the life-

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[11] The phrase 'merits of the case' translates κατ᾽ ἀξίαν γάρ. Irwin renders it 'what something is worth' (2019, p. 49). The final clause—'as reason requires'—complicates my argument but does not prove fatal. I agree with Moss's claim that what reason prescribes is the mean and the particulars of the situation, not the value of the end, since the value of the end is discerned through non-rational perception, as Aristotle repeatedly states.

threatening situation a conception or schema of nobility.[12] Nobility requires, among other things, that the virtuous man be willing to die in battle defending his country (for this is one of the finest acts a human can perform, if done for the right reason). Thus, the courageous man sees the threatening situation as an opportunity to be courageous, and desires to do so. Consider two soldiers: both are ordered to lead a surge into dangerous enemy territory, and both follow orders. Both <u>act</u> in a courageous manner. But soldier A feels intense fear and trepidation. Like the disguised Odysseus, he must steel his heart and talk himself into doing what he believes he should. Soldier B is so focused on his duty as a soldier and the honour that comes from risking one's life for the sake of one's country that he proceeds without hesitation.[13] Soldier A is <u>enkratic</u> or weak-willed, not virtuous, because he construes or immediately perceives that situation in life-threatening terms, rather than honour-conferring terms, and therefore experiences significantly more fear than soldier B. The virtuous agent—soldier B—perceives the situation in the right way and therefore experiences the proper emotion (or at least less of the improper—fear). So, even though character virtue regulates both actions and emotions, and is often most expressed in action, 'an action, in Aristotle's technical sense, is defined in terms of how the agent sees what they are doing' (Hughes, 2001, p. 56). An agent who has achieved character virtue will

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[12] Ross and Nisbett (2011) define an interpretive schema as 'a knowledge structure that summarizes generic knowledge and previous experience with respect to a given class of stimuli and events and, at the same time, gives meaning and guides anticipation with respect to similar stimuli and events in the future' (2011, p. 12).

[13] Cf. Hughes (2001) for a similar thought experiment.

have the habitual disposition to 'respond to situations by having appropriate or inappropriate feelings' (Hughes, 2001, p. 57).

IV.   Phantasia as Non-Rational Evaluative Cognition

Let's review: the virtue-skill analogy is located primarily in the section on character virtues. Character virtues inhabit the non-rational part of the soul, specifically the <u>orektikon</u>. The <u>orektikon</u> produces all non-rational desires including various appetites and emotions. Character virtue has primarily to do with one form of non-rational desire, <u>pathé</u>, and determines how the agent non-rationally sees or perceives ends. This last point needs further unpacking. Many Aristotelians claim that practical reason is that mode through which ethical agents perceive their ends. Recall Hacker-Wright's claim that it is practical wisdom that provides us with 'a correct conception of worthwhile ends.' This claim is a problem for the virtue-skill analogy, because it does not seem that practical wisdom is developed in the same way as a skill. However, the claim that practical wisdom gives the agent his ends flies in the face of robust textual evidence. Here I review a few examples and argue that for Aristotle, character virtue sets our ends or 'makes the goal right,' not practical wisdom. Aristotle stresses that character virtue 'sets the end' and provides the agent with the 'correct belief about the starting point' (<u>NE</u> 1144a4; <u>NE</u> 1151a17-18). In the <u>Eudemian Ethics</u>, Aristotle asks 'Does virtue make the goal correct, or what lies on the way to it? We assert that it is the goal, because of this there is no inference or reasoning. Let us, then, accept this as a starting point (ἀρχὴ)' (11227b23–25).[14] Character virtue works much like intellectual intuition or <u>nous</u>, 'which gives us the true view of the premises from which our

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[14] For a discussion of these passages see Moss, 2014, pp. 222-25.

theoretical demonstrations follow' (Moss, 2011, p. 222). Character virtue provides us with our desired ends, and practical wisdom works out how to achieve those ends.[15]

So, character virtue provides us with our ends. Our character tells us what ends are desirable, or what we view as the good or the apparent good. This point is further confirmed by a passage from the <u>Nicomachean Ethics</u> that Sherman translates as follows: 'Someone might say that everyone aims at the apparent good, but does not control its appearance; but the end appears to each person in a way that corresponds to his character. For if each person is somehow responsible for his own state of character, he will also be himself somehow responsible for its [viz. the end's] appearance [φαντασίας] (1114b1–3, cf., 1114b17)' (Sherman, 1989, p. 32). A second, crucial point about character virtue is highlighted by this passage: 'the end appears (φαίνεταιto) to each person in a way that corresponds to his character.' Not only does character virtue literally provide us with our ends, but how the end appears to the agent—that is, whether it appears good or bad, desirable or undesirable—is a function of the agent's phantastic capacity.

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[15] The perceptive reader might raise an objection at this point: if non-rational character provides our practical ends <u>in toto</u>, then what is the difference between Aristotle and Hume? Moss suggests that practical reason has two functions in the moral life for Aristotle that are very un-Humean: 'First, it is reason's job to grasp what one's character has fixed as a goal, and also to recognize it as a goal. Second, the reasoning that goes into figuring out how to achieve the virtuous person's goal requires an ethical sensitivity totally lacking in mere instrumental efficiency' (2014, p. 223). One might also note the purpose of <u>boulêsis</u> in the process. Once a practical end—provided by the agent's moral character—is grasped as an end via <u>phronēsis</u>, the agent can then form a rational wish for that end.

Aristotle's use of phantasia and the related phaínō in the passage Sherman cites is not accidental. Phantasia is not just a word for appearances or even imaginings. It is a faculty or capacity, often referred to as the faculty of the imagination. But even this is an inadequate definition. As Dorothea Frede points out, in Aristotle the concept of 'phantasia does triple duty. It designates the capacity, the activity or process, and the product or result' (1992, p. 279). Sorabji emphasises that in the De Anima, phantasia refers to both perceptual and post-perceptual appearance, examples of the latter being imagination, dreams, and memory, all resulting from prior perceptions (1993, p. 197). Thus, phantasia is a cognitive capacity. But it is also a non-rational capacity, something that stems from the orektikon in human beings. Do we have reason for thinking that phantasia is both cognitive and non-rational? Yes, based on passages in the De Motu Animalium and the De Anima. The De Motu provides the following insight: 'We see that the things which move the animal are thought and phantasia and decision and wish and appetite. And all these can be reduced to intellect (nous) and desire (orexis). For both phantasia and perception (aísthēsis) hold the same place as intellect, for they are all cognitive (kritika)' (700b17–21).[16] Aristotle places nous on one side, and orexis on the other, as the main motivating capacities of animals. And under orexis he places phantasia and aísthēsis (perception). Nous—intellect or thought—is clearly a rational capacity for Aristotle. Orexis is generally a non-rational desire and it is certainly non-rational in this passage, since Aristotle is telling the reader what capacities motivate both human and non-human animals (and the latter lack nous).

Crucially, this passage emphasises that both perception and phantasia are cognitive: they are both discriminating capacities. Nussbaum's translation essentially agrees with Moss's: 'For both phantasia and choice and wish hold the same place as thought, since all are concerned with

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[16] Translation from Moss, 2012, pp. 9–10.

making distinctions…' (1978, p. 38). What is more, Nussbaum's translation brings out an important aspect of <u>kritika</u>, from <u>krinein</u>, in this context. Although <u>krinein</u> has commonly been translated 'to judge,' Ebert provides ample evidence that the more accurate translation given the historical context is to discern or discriminate, thus, to make distinctions (1983, p. 190). So, all these capacities—thought, sense perception, and <u>phantasia</u>—are discriminating or distinction-making capacities.

Based on these passages, <u>phantasia</u> is a cognitive (discriminating) and motivating capacity, but we might still wonder whether it is non-rational. Aristotle answers that question in the <u>Eudemian Ethics</u>, where he states:

> The object of desire and the object of wish is either the good or the apparent good. And this is why the pleasant is an object of desire, for it is an apparent good; for some believe it is [good], and to some it appears [good] although they do not believe it so. <u>For phantasia and belief are not in the same part of the soul</u> (<u>EE</u> 1235b26–29, my emphasis).[17]

We can deduce from this passage that in humans, <u>phantasia</u> is in the non-rational part of the soul, the <u>orektikon</u>. It is motivating, discriminating, and distinct from the intellectual or rational part of the soul.[18] One final passage from the <u>De Anima</u> confirms this psychology: 'Now understanding

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[17] Translation from Moss, 2012, p. 48.

[18] One might object here that this description of discrimination makes it sound like an intellectual capacity. Yet there are many examples of discrimination in non-rational perception. We discriminate the difference between chocolate and vanilla or loud and soft sounds without anything conscious: the discrimination is intuitive and immediate. And discrimination can

(nous) in always correct, whereas desire and imagination (phantasia) are both correct and incorrect. That is why what causes movement in every case is the object of desire, which is either the good or the apparent good' (de Anima 433a26–29). A rational desire is always for the actual good; non-rational desire is based on phantasia and can be for the good or the apparent good (Moss, 2012, p. 139).

In sum, I have argued in this section that it is character, and not practical wisdom, that supplies us with the content of our practical goals. This is possible because character virtue determines how the end appears to the agent. Specifically, the faculty that provides the agent with these appearances is phantasia. Phantasia is a cognitive, motivating capacity that stems from the non-rational part of the soul and allows for non-rational evaluative cognition. Phantasia allows the agent to cognise ends as goods or apparent goods. And in straight forward cases, agents with good ethical character will perceive actual goods as good since they have been habituated to do so.[19] The claim that character provides us with our ends is crucial to my

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sometimes take effort (to really focus and pay close attention to discern fine distinctions), and it may sometimes involve rationality, like when thinking through the taste profiles of two different wines or the brush styles of two different drummers to discern which is which. But this high level of cognition is not always involved in perceptual discrimination.

[19] It does seem that in difficult cases where the actual good is not clear, the intellectual capacities (most likely phronēsis) will be necessary to discern the good. But, even in these cases, it is one's ethical character that limits the field of options. A bigger challenge results from Aristotle's discussion of the akratic individual who 'tends to be carried away contrary to correct reason because of the ways he is affected' yet the archē is preserved in him (NE, 1151a20–25).

argument because the intellectualist defeaters to the virtue-skill analogy are based on the claim that only practical wisdom—a rational capacity from the rational part of the soul—can provide us with our ends. However, Aristotle is clear that <u>phantasia</u> provides us with our ends. If <u>phantasia</u> is something that is subject to non-rational habituation, then virtue can indeed be like a skill. Now I turn to the argument that <u>pathé</u> are based on <u>phantasiai</u>.

V.   Appearance-Based Emotions

It has become common among Aristotle scholars to argue that Aristotle holds a cognitive theory of the emotions. More specifically, these scholars argue that for Aristotle, emotions are constituted by beliefs (Fortenbaugh, 2006, p. 113), or even judgements (Nussbaum, 1986, p. 83). However, this is strange since Aristotle distinguishes between the rational and non-rational parts of the soul, attributing the emotions to the part that contains <u>phantasia</u> and perception and beliefs to the rational part. The straightforward conclusion is that emotions are based on a non-rational form of cognition, but which form? Aristotle provides us with the answer. His defines

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Jay Elliott (2018) argues that the akratic person has not received a virtuous upbringing, yet still rationally desires a good end. Aristotle does not tell us how the akratic acquired that <u>archē</u>, but Elliott argues that it must have been through some rational process. Elliott concludes that Aristotle's is a ''character pluralism,' according to which Aristotle's moral psychology does not involve a single conception of psychic structure or moral development that is equally applicable to all character types' (Elliott, 2018, p. 448). Since this essay is primarily concerned with how the virtuous person's character provides him with his practical ends, I do not consider how <u>akrasia</u> might affect my argument.

emotions in general as 'all those affections that change men so as to influence their judgments (κρίσεις), and are accompanied by pleasure and pain; such are anger, pity, fear, and all similar emotions and their contraries.'(Rhetoric, 1378a8-9). This makes clear that emotions are discriminating (they cause a change in judgement) and are pleasurable or painful. But it does not speak of any direct relation to phantasia. Fortunately, the rest of the Rhetoric is helpful: of the twelve emotions described therein, seven contain direct references to phantasia or its verb form (Sihvola, 1996, p. 116). Moss notes that 'A close look at the Rhetoric's characterizations of the passions shows that they involve phantasia in particular: they all depend on memory, expectation, or imaginative embellishment of a situation (e.g. visualization) – which are paradigm exercises of phantasia' (2012, p. 70).

> Fear illustrates the phantastic basis of emotions:
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> Aristotle defines fear as 'a certain kind of pain and disturbance out of the appearance of an impending destructive or painful bad thing' (Rhet II 5, 1382a21–3), adds that these bad things must 'appear to be close and not far-off' (Rhet II 5, 1382a24–5), and finally remarks that 'it is necessary that those things are fearful that appear to have a great power to destroy or cause harms that lead to great pain (Rhet II 5, 1382a28–30).' (Sihvola, 1996, p. 116, my emphasis)

Fear illustrates the three essential features that all emotions have in the Rhetoric. First, they are pleasurable or painful, second, they involve 'evaluative representations,' and third, these emotions are representations stemming from the phantastic capacity (Moss, 2012, p. 75). Fear is a perception of something as impending and threatening, and this perception causes pain or disturbance in the perceiver. But if it is a perception and is accompanied by pleasure and pain, why must it be an instance of phantasia? After all, hearing a very loud, high pitched noise is a

job for sense perception, and it also painful. However, emotions are not simply pleasurable or painful perceptions, they are <u>evaluative</u> perceptions. To hear a noise as loud and painful is not necessarily to value it in any way. The noise does not offend you or threaten you (of course, if it does threaten you then you have evaluated it, but this is not a necessary condition of the sense perception of a loud noise). Emotions, on the other hand, accompany (or rather, are constituted by) <u>evaluative</u> perceptions.

Another reason that emotions are not simply sense perceptions but instead rely on <u>phantasia</u> is that emotions are not just about immediately perceivable objects (although they sometimes are). In fact, Aristotle's characterisation of the various emotions in the <u>Rhetoric</u> indicate that more often emotions involve memories of past events and imaginative embellishment of future events. Consider the following passage from the <u>Rhetoric</u>:

> 'Since to be pleased lies in perceiving a certain affection (ἐστὶν τὸ ἥδεσθαι ἐν τῷ αἰσθάνεσθαί τινος πάθους), and <u>phantasia</u> is a kind of weak perception (αἴσθησίς τις σθενής), [and] some <u>phantasia</u> of what a person remembers or expects [hopes – ἐλπίζει] would always attend in remembering or expecting – if this is the case, **it is clear that pleasures come simultaneously to those who are remembering and expecting, since there is perception there, too**. Thus it is necessary that all pleasant things are either present in perceiving or past in remembering or future in expecting; for people perceive the present, remember the past, and expect the future'. (<u>Rhetoric</u>, 1370a28-35)[20]

This quote makes three things clear. First, <u>phantasia</u> is a kind of perception, but not the same capacity as <u>aísthēsis</u>. Second, <u>phantasia</u> is an <u>affective</u> perception, a perception of a pleasant or

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[20] Translation from Moss, 2012, p. 78.

painful thing. Finally—and another quality that distinguishes phantasia from aísthēsis —
phantasiai are not only about present perceptions (although they can be) but are also about
memories and expectations. Rhetoric I.11 further supports this claim by describing winning as
pleasurable on account of a mental image (phantasia) of superiority, and honour and reputation
as being pleasant based on a mental image of being like the excellent person (1370b32–4,
1371a8–9).[21] This last point is crucial when discussing emotion regulation and especially
cognitive-behavioural therapy.

The reader might object at this point and claim that the texts that I have been examining
to support my argument about phantasia (e.g. De Motu Animalium, De Anima, On Rhetoric)
have a different goal than the ethical works (none of them are about human virtue or flourishing
per se), and therefore contain slight but important differences in psychology. So how do the
ethical writings conceive of emotions? In the Ethics, virtues are characteristics defined primarily
by the emotions they regulate, and the feelings the agent experiences in a virtue-eliciting
situation both guide the agent's response and are indicators of whether the response is virtuous.
Furthermore, Aristotle explicitly defines pathé in the Nicomachean Ethics as 'epithumia, anger,
fear, confidence, envy, joy, love, hate, longing, emulation, pity, and in general things
accompanied by pleasure and pain' (1105b21–23, my emphasis). A person's state of character
is primarily revealed by their emotions, and those emotions are always accompanied by pleasure
and pain. When Aristotle is discussing what psychological power virtue is, he declares that
virtue is a hexis or state: 'And by hexeis I mean those things in respect of which we are well or
badly disposed in relation to pathé. If, for example, in relation to anger, we feel it too much or

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[21] See Moss, 2012, p. 84.

too little, we are badly disposed; but if we are between the two, then well disposed' (NE, 1105a26–27). Virtues are dispositions to appropriate actions, but actions are only virtuous if motivated by the proper pathé. A chief indicator of the agent's moral state is the agent's emotions or feelings. The virtuous response cannot exist apart from the proper feelings. But Aristotle goes even further, asserting that virtues have to do with situations where the agent is affected or acted upon in a sense, 'and pleasure and pain follow from every action and situation of being affected, then this is another reason why virtue will be concerned with pleasures and pains' (NE, 1104b14–17). The emotions that constitute virtues are affective mental states, a point driven home once again by the example of courage:

> 'the person who enjoys facing up to danger, or at least does not find it painful to do so, is
> courageous, while he who does find it painful is a coward. For virtue of character is
> concerned with pleasure and pains; it is because of pleasure that we do bad actions, and
> pain that we abstain from noble ones.' (NE, 1104b8–11, my emphasis)

When a soldier sees the enemy approaching, his immediate perceptual response is either one of intense fear—which is immediately painful—, or courage—which is probably pleasurable, or at least not painful.[22] The soldier has an affective mental state, and although the Ethics does not make this clear, this mental state is surely tied to previous experiences (and the painful or pleasurable mental states tied to those experiences), and based in part on the anticipation of the impending attack bringing either pleasure or pain.

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[22] Of course, these are not the only two options but are used for the sake of clarity and simplicity.

Aristotle repeatedly makes a clear connection between virtue, emotion, and feeling (pain and pleasure). In a summary passage, Aristotle declares, 'we regulate our actions by pleasure and pain. Our whole inquiry, then, must be concerned with them, because whether we feel enjoyment and pain in a good or bad way has great influence on our actions' (NE, 1105a5–8). The Ethics stresses that emotions are at the heart of virtue, that virtue regulates emotions, and that those emotions (and hence the virtues) are accompanied by pleasure and pain. When fear is accompanied by pleasure or pain, it is most likely because it is an affective mental state tied to the memory or anticipation of similar feelings. But the question that remains is whether the Ethics confirms that emotions are pleasurable or affective perceptions. Consider a passage from the end of book II, where Aristotle is asking how we discern the mean: 'But how far and to what extent someone must deviate (from the mean) before becoming blameworthy it is not easy to determine by reason (λόγῳ), because nothing perceived by our senses is easily determined; such things are particulars, and judgment about them lies in perception (αἰσθήσει ἡ κρίσις)' (NE, 1109b20–24, my emphasis). The mean is discovered through the faculty of perception (aísthēsis), a discriminating faculty. And the mean concerning the disposition or state of courage—discussed above—makes us 'well or badly disposed in relation to feelings' (NE, 1105a26). And if we are courageous at the proper time, it is because of feelings: 'it is because of pleasure that we do bad actions, and pain that we abstain from noble ones' (NE, 1104b11). The courageous soldier perceives the impending attack as a situation calling for a courageous response, a perception immediately accompanied by pleasure (or at least the lack of significant pain). In other words, the soldier does not construe the situation as one calling for courage without the accompanying feeling. We can conclude that courage is a mean state of emotion determined by perception and accompanied by pleasure or pain. When we perceive a situation

as one calling for courage, our perception is guided by pleasure or pain. Although in the Ethics the case is not as clear that emotions are pleasurable perceptions as it is in the psychological writings, it is clear that virtue concerns situations of being affected; furthermore, virtue is determined by perception, concerned primarily with emotions, and guided by pleasure and pain. Put together, these aspects strongly suggest that emotions are affective perceptions, and are thus appearances stemming from the phantastic capacity, placing them clearly in the non-rational part of the soul and involving non-rational capacities.

VI.   Phantastic Habituation and Emotion Regulation

I have argued that character virtue is non-rational, provides us with our ends, and is primarily concerned with phantasia-based pathé. Emotions are phantasiai that are accompanied by pleasure and pain and cause a change in the agent's judgement or construal of the object or situation. Thus, emotions are cognitive because they are ways of construing. We now come back full circle to Aristotle's virtue-skill analogy, and his crucial claim that 'like activities produce like states.' If the states in question are primarily concerned with phantasiai accompanied by pleasure, then surely the activities that need to be practised and repeated to produce those states will be activities focused on pleasurable phantasiai.

At this point another doxastic objection arises. A puzzle remains, because if 'like states' is supposed to mean 'fully or completely virtuous states,' then the activities flowing from such states are not possible for the non-virtuous person, because doxastic and phantastic interpreters agree that full moral virtue is assumed to include prohairesis as a key component (e.g. Irwin,

1980; Sherman 1989; Bostock, 2000; Moss, 2011).[23] Aristotle clearly says as much in <u>NE</u> VI, stating 'it is impossible to be good in the <u>full sense of the word without practical wisdom</u> (κυρίως ἄνευ φρονήσεως)' (1144b30).[24] Bostock notes that Ross's rendition 'virtue in the strict sense' comes closest to conveying Aristotle's meaning (2000, p. 86). A person cannot be virtuous in the strict sense without <u>phronēsis</u>. But why does Aristotle modify <u>agathos</u> with <u>kuria</u> here? Bostock notes that while Aristotle draws a clear distinction between 'natural virtue' and 'full virtue' (<u>aretè</u> <u>kuria</u>), a third level is necessary to reconcile Aristotle's claims concerning moral virtue in book II (2000, p. 86). Bostock calls the third, intermediary level 'trained virtue,' (2000, p. 86) while Moss calls it 'habituated virtue' (2011, p. 212). What justification do we have for this intermediate level? First, Aristotle stresses that 'nature gives us the capacity to acquire them (moral virtues), and completion comes through habituation' (<u>NE</u>, 1103a). He ends that chapter stating that 'it is not unimportant how we are habituated from or early days; indeed, it makes a huge difference—or rather all the difference' (<u>NE</u>, 1103b). Furthermore, the goal passages in book VI clearly state that moral virtue provides us with our ends, and <u>phronesis</u> with the means to achieve those ends. Once you have acquired habituated virtue, you will <u>want</u> to be virtuous; virtue will be your aim. You are disposed to virtuous emotions and actions before you

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[23] Thanks to Frans Svensson for pressing me on this point in personal correspondence.

[24] See also 'Now virtue in the full sense cannot be attained without practical reason (<u>phronēsis</u>)' (<u>NE</u>, 1144b17) and 'Virtue or excellence is not only a characteristic which is guided by right reason, but also a characteristic which is united with right reason; and right reason in moral matters is practical reason (<u>phronēsis</u>)' (<u>NE</u>, 1144b25).

possess prohairesis. However, there may be times where the virtuous action is not obvious, and conscious reasoning is necessary to achieve your virtuous goal.

Finally, Aristotle is very adamant at the end of the Nicomachean Ethics that education and argument will do little or nothing to help the person with bad character traits. 'For the natural tendency of most people is to be swayed not by a sense of shame but by fear, and to refrain from acting basely not because it is disgraceful, but because of the punishment it brings…(therefore) [t]o change by argument what has long been ingrained in a character is impossible or, at least, not easy' (NE, 1179b10–18, my emphasis). This passage makes it clear that the disposition to act nobly or shamefully is formed long before a person can understand complex arguments. A few lines latter Aristotle further illuminates why habituation is so important:

> Argument and teaching, I am afraid, are not effective in all cases: the soul of the listener must first have been conditioned by habits to the right kinds of likes and dislikes, just as land [must be cultivated before it is able] to foster the seed. For a man whose life is guided by emotion will not listen to an argument that dissuades him, nor will he understand it. How can we possibly persuade a man to change his ways? And in general it seems that emotions do not yield to argument but only to force. Therefore, there must first be a character that somehow has an affinity for excellence or virtue, a character that loves what is noble and feels disgust at what is base (NE, 1179b24–30, my emphasis).

Habituation during a person's upbringing develops the disposition to love what is noble and despise what is base. It is this person who is amenable to education and argument. The person with habituated virtue will already consistently have the right affective perceptions and can now develop the intellectual virtue of phronēsis, necessary for aretè kuria. This distinction between habituated and full virtue is why Aristotle can claim that like activities produce like states,

because the activities in question do not have to be activities exactly as the person possessing virtue in the full sense would perform them (accompanied by phronēsis), but as the person with habituated virtue would.

A question remains: do we have any contemporary evidence supporting Aristotle's developmental account of moral virtue? A key aspect of his theory is that emotions and feelings must be appropriate and moderate, but other than simply giving a child chocolate every time they have the right emotion (which would surely be counterproductive), how might emotions be habituated? Sherman's notion of critical practice provides some insight. Sherman states that 'The model I ascribe to Aristotle is thus that of a chain of activities which increase in discriminated complexity as well as in derivative pleasures' (Sherman, 1989, p. 184). This critical practice is possible because of the child's cognitive yet non-rational capacities, and it is pleasurable because as the child becomes better at the practice, he comes to appreciate more and more the goods internal to that practice, and find the good performance of that practice pleasurable. Furthermore, 'Cultivating the dispositional capacities to feel fear, anger, goodwill, compassion, or pity appropriately will be bound up with learning how to discern the circumstances that warrant these responses' (Sherman, 1989, p. 166–67). The child will need to be taught how to perceive rightly, how to discriminate between different features of his environment. Learning perceptual discrimination will require instruction and example. The child's parent or teacher will point out to the child the particular aspects of certain situations that make certain emotions proper and others improper (Sherman, 1989, p. 171). There will also be ongoing conversation and continual attempts at refinement and improvement of the child's discriminatory capacities. Sherman stresses that though the child lacks the capacity for deliberation (bouleutikon), he possesses the

capacities of affect, discrimination, perception, and instrumental reasoning (1989, p. 161). And it

is these capacities that make critical practice possible.

Sherman's account is helpful, but still highly speculative. She claims that the child

somehow learns how to discern the circumstances that warrant the proper emotional responses,

but how? Long before a child can properly 'compose the scene' they need to be able to regulate

their emotions. Contemporary research suggests that Aristotle was correct in his claim that

emotions can be habituated, and that the process of habituation can start at a very early age.[25]

The most basic form is calming your body through physical activities such as the STAR (stop,

take a breath, and relax), pretzel (giving oneself a hug), water faucet (moving one's arms and

making sounds like a faucet), etc. But there are more complex techniques that older (primary

school) children can begin to employ that can be fruitfully utilised by adults as well.

Psychologist James J. Gross and colleagues have researched various emotion-regulation

strategies. They have been conducting experiments for over twenty years that focus on both basic

and more advanced cognitive strategies that humans can engage in to influence what emotions

they have, how they express them, and what behaviours follow from them.[26] They state, 'specific

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[25] Angier notes that 'there is empirical evidence that moral dispositions are attainments

characteristically developed over long periods of time, attainments that require repeated

involvement in corresponding activities' but does not indicate what that empirical evidence

might be (2010, p. 108).

[26] The reader should note that these experiments on emotion regulation are not 'one-off'

studies. The evidence is well documented and robust. For instance, see Gross (2007). For a

related overview, see Beauregard (2007).

emotion-regulation strategies can be differentiated along the timeline of the unfolding emotional response' (Gross and John, 2003, p. 348). Most of these strategies are antecedent focused—they take place before the emotion has been generated.[27] The most relevant antecedent-focused strategy for virtue cultivation is cognitive reappraisal, 'a form of cognitive change that involves construing a potentially emotion-eliciting situation to change its emotional impact' (John and Gross, 2004, p. 1304). With cognitive reappraisal, the agent intentionally construes the perceptual event in different terms. Someone with the vice of excessive anger is going to construe many innocuous actions or situations as offensive by interpreting the 'offending' person's actions as an intentional spite; if they wish to decrease their anger, they need to reconstrue the situation by giving the 'offending' person's actions a different interpretation. In class, I once brought up the example of getting angry at another driver who cuts you off in traffic. One of my students responded that she always assumes that the 'offender' really needed to use to restroom, and this keeps her from getting angry. She is reconstruing the situation in different terms and this reconstrual changes her emotional reaction as a result. Agents often use cognitive reappraisal to decrease emotional experience but can also use it to enhance emotional experience or to experience what is deemed the proper or beneficial emotional experience. And one might do this ahead of time through visualisation or imagination. When knowing that one needs to have an uncomfortable conversation with a friend, one might imagine the conversation as resulting in a deeper bond between friends.

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[27] One strategy is response focused—it takes place after the emotion is generated. Gross and John call it 'expressive suppression' (2003, p. 349).

Numerous experiments validate the efficacy of cognitive reappraisal. One experiment involving cognitive reappraisal asks subjects to view a sad film clip but to think about the film so it does not make them sad (i.e. as a film critic might). In this experiment, 'reappraisal decreased both the experience and the behavioural expression of negative emotion' (John and Gross, 2004, p. 1306). More importantly, cognitive reappraisal can have lasting effects. For example, in one experiment, subjects viewed a sad film clip. One group of subjects reappraised during the viewing, and the other watched as they normally would. Researchers then moved the subjects to another room, where subjects read three moral dilemmas. Subjects then related the emotions aroused by the dilemma and their strength and ranked the moral wrongness of the action taken in the dilemma. Researchers concluded, 'Participants in the reappraisal condition subsequently rated the behavior of the targets in the scenarios as significantly less immoral . . . (and) reported experiencing significantly less intense emotion than did participants in the control condition' (Feinberg et al., 2012, p. 792). By engaging in the emotion-regulation strategy of cognitive reappraisal, agents intentionally change both their construals of stimuli and their emotional impact and can affect how they encounter future stimuli.

But these are still mostly synchronic examples, not instances that bring about deep and lasting change. This is where cognitive-behavioural therapy comes in. Jeffrey M. Schwartz's research on cognitive-behavioural therapy (CBT) aimed at patients suffering from obsessive-compulsive disorder (OCD) exemplifies a long-term antecedent-focused strategy that includes cognitive reappraisal as well as other antecedent-focused strategies (and of course practices aimed at behavioural modification). Schwartz and other researchers believe that OCD patients can actually change their behaviours (and indeed their neurocircuitry), and, to this end,

developed a multi-step cognitive-behavioural method (1999, p. 122).[28] These steps include

reappraisal by relabelling obsessive thoughts, attentional deployment by turning one's attention

to something else besides the obsessive thoughts, and behavioural changes. For instance, one can

work in the garden instead of washing one's hands yet again. Or a patient might be taught to

reconstrue a dirty clothe that normally induces a compulsion to wash their hands, and instead

remind themselves that it is just axle grease, and their hands are not dirty and do not need be to

washed (Schwartz, 1999, p. 129). Twelve out of eighteen patients who engaged in this nine-week

programme experienced both objective and subjective change. They reported significant

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[28] Although Schwartz developed his own unique version of CBT, CBT is one of the most

widely studied and successfully implemented therapies in modern psychology. As Greg

Lukianoff and Jonathan Haidt state in their article 'The Coddling of the American Mind,'

'Cognitive behavioral therapy is a modern embodiment of this ancient wisdom. It is the most

extensively studied nonpharmaceutical treatment of mental illness, and is used widely to treat

depression, anxiety disorders, eating disorders, and addiction. It can even be of help to

schizophrenics. No other form of psychotherapy has been shown to work for a broader range of

problems. Studies have generally found that it is as effective as antidepressant drugs (such as

Prozac) in the treatment of anxiety and depression. The therapy is relatively quick and easy to

learn; after a few months of training, many patients can do it on their own. Unlike drugs,

cognitive behavioral therapy keeps working long after treatment is stopped, because it teaches

thinking skills that people can continue to use' (2015, p. 46). See also Teasdale (1997) and

Steketee et al. (1998).

reduction in their OCD behaviour, and their brain activity differed significantly (based on scans before and after the programme) (1999, p. 124).[29]

The cognitive reappraisal strategies used to combat OCD symptoms is notable in relation to Aristotle's account of virtue habituation. An OCD sufferer who constantly washes their hands has a perception of their hands as dirty, accompanied by a painful or unpleasant sensation, and experiences anxiety or stress. In other words, the OCD sufferer has an affective perception that motivates an action, the action of handwashing. Both the perception and the action are habitual qualities. OCD sufferers are disposed to see their hands as dirty, feel disgust and stress and wash to stop those feelings. When OCD sufferers engage in diachronic cognitive-behavioural strategies, they are habituating their affective perceptions so that first they will not feel as strong emotions aimed at their (perceived as) 'dirty' hands, and eventually will no longer have the impression that their hands are dirty at all. They practice discriminating between true and false impressions of dirtiness, and this practice regulates their emotions, which in turns generates different perceptions or impressions.

Thus, emotion regulation can start at the most basic level and gradually get more advanced. For children, it need not be nearly as complex as for an OCD sufferer. Simple practices such as calming their bodies, focusing or re-focusing their attention, and being

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[29] Schwartz notes that 'What this accomplishes is a change in perspective away from automatic responses (exactly the sort of activity the basal ganglia is wired by many millennia of evolution to perform) . . . and toward a more precise, considered, and consciously goal-directed interpretation of the present moment's experience—which is, of course, a much more cortically directed activity' (1999, p. 127).

rewarded for the appropriate behaviour (or punished for the inappropriate) will slowly habituate appropriate emotions. The example of cognitive reappraisal as seen in CBT reinforces the cognitive nature of emotions; it also shows that emotions are not directly affected by the rational assent to a proposition or judgement. We cannot simply decide that a person or event should not make us angry. Rather, we must focus on different aspects of the situation or construe it in different terms. Furthermore, as Aristotle indicates in his discussion of honour and reputation, we can imagine how we want things to turn out. Doing this repeatedly (as in the case of CBT) makes it easier and can generate lasting change. The virtuous person will have habituated character virtue and that person's character will control how he sees or construes the ends and thus what emotions he experiences. The comparison with cognitive emotion-regulation strategies also helps us see that although Aristotle's own view of the habituation of moral virtue is not intellectualist, it is not subrational either. Emotions are non-rational but cognitive and affected through cognitive efforts. And most of all it helps us see that like activities—regulatory activities—will produce like states—that is, a person with well-regulated emotions or habituated virtue. Character virtue is indeed like a skill, the skill of emotion regulation.

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